



OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY: FACILITATOR GUIDE

This facilitator guide provides examples of ways to enhance the classroom community for each classroom vignette. After participants share their suggestions, a facilitator may want to suggest the additional examples listed below.

Vignette One:

Outside on the playground three children are actively engaged in dramatic play. Riding tricycles down the sidewalk making siren sounds, one child exclaims, "I see the fire." The group suddenly stops at the playhouse and proceeds to pretend to spray the house with the fire hose. A fourth child approaches the group and begins to pretend to spray out the fire. A "firefighter" notices this child who joined in the play and proclaims, "We are the firefighters. You are not!" And the three "firefighters" quickly ride away on the tricycles.

Ways to enhance the community of learners:

- Create a classroom agreement that everyone is welcome to play with anyone. Role-play with children to see how it feels when someone tells you that you cannot play with them. Help children come up with solutions for what they can do and say when someone wants to play with them. Work with children to practice these solutions and remind children of these ideas when they are faced with this dilemma. Acknowledge that sometimes certain activities only allow for a specific number of children (e.g., number of children on a tire swing, number of headphones for an audio story, etc.) and explain that, in these cases, children will need strategies for taking turns.
- Provide opportunities for children to learn about the roles and responsibilities of firefighters. Talk with children about how firefighters work as a team to protect the community. Help children understand that when there are more firefighters, it is easier for them to get their job done. Examples of possible roles for various firefighters: driving the fire engine to the emergency site, listening to the radio to get any needed instructions, talking to the fire station to share updates and information, operating the ladder, going into the building to save the people and animals, operating the fire hoses to spray water on the fire, etc. Helping children understand all of these duties provides many opportunities for inclusion of multiple children in play. Children recognize the need and the importance of working together when engaged in this play.

Vignette Two:

To provide an opportunity for children to participate in a class mural a teacher cuts 18 white paper squares for each child to paint. She calls the children over one at a time to paint their individual square. After all the children complete their painting the teacher attaches the squares together to form one painting and hangs it on the classroom wall, entitling it "We Work Together Beautifully."

Ways to enhance the learning community:

- Change the materials for the activity to create an opportunity for the children to work together on one piece of art. Using a single large piece of paper provides an opportunity for children to contribute to one large class mural. During free play time, children can choose to spend some time working on this community project.
- Create a small group activity where children work together to create a piece of art. Allow the children to be creative and construct a masterpiece that incorporates the ideas of all children in the small group. Repeat this small group activity so that all children have an opportunity to participate. Display these pieces together to represent the entire classroom community.

Vignette Three:

During a morning breakfast time a child looks at the teacher and asks, "Where is him?" The teacher responds asking, "Where is who?" The child repeats, "Him!" pointing to the chair next to her. "Who are you talking about? Which boy are you looking for?" the teacher inquires. Frustrated the child says, "The boy who plays blocks with me!" The teacher asks, "Are you asking where Jaylen is? Jaylen is home sick today." The child responds, "Is that who plays blocks with me?"

Ways to enhance the community of learners:

- Create classroom rituals around singing songs that incorporate children's names. Songs can be incorporated into morning greetings, afternoon departures, or classroom transitions. Teachers can encourage children to participate by pausing their singing and allowing children to fill-in their peers' names.
- Engage children in classroom games that promote learning about all members of the classroom community. For example, a teacher could create a matching game using pictures of children and teachers in the classroom. While playing the game teachers and children can engage in conversations about members of the classroom community.
- Display children's and teachers' pictures with names on the wall or in a classroom book. Encourage children to use these images to refer to members of the classroom community (e.g., when trying to figure out who is absent from class or when referring to a "friend" whose name a child does not know).



OPPORTUNITIES TO ENHANCE COMMUNITY

This learning activity includes classroom vignettes that depict interactions between children and teachers. Participants read each vignette and discuss elements that promote and/or discourage a feeling of caring and community. For each vignette, provide two suggestions for how teachers could improve the community for learning. Participants may work independently or in small groups.

Vignette One:

Outside on the playground, three children are actively engaged in dramatic play. While riding tricycles down the sidewalk and making siren sounds, one child exclaims, "I see the fire!" The group suddenly stops at the playhouse and proceeds to pretend to spray the house with the fire hose. A fourth child approaches the group and begins to pretend to spray out the fire. A "firefighter" notices this child who joined in the play and proclaims, "We are the firefighters. You are not!" And the three "firefighters" quickly ride away on the tricycles.

Vignette Two:

To provide an opportunity for children to participate in a class mural, a teacher cuts 18 white paper squares for each child to paint. She calls the children over one at a time to paint their individual square. After all the children complete their painting, the teacher attaches the squares together to form one painting and hangs it on the classroom wall, entitling it "We Work Together Beautifully."

Vignette Three:

During morning breakfast time, a child looks at the teacher and asks, "Where is him?" The teacher responds asking, "Where is who?" The child repeats, "Him!" pointing to the chair next to her. "Who are you talking about? Which boy are you looking for?" the teacher inquires. Frustrated, the child says, "The boy who plays blocks with me!" The teacher asks, "Are you asking where Jaylen is? Jaylen is home sick today." The child responds, "Is that who plays blocks with me?"